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FADRC FOI CASE NO. 640392 Bhagat

IN A BRIEF CONVERSATION AFTER THE PRESENTATION CEREMONIES, DE GAULLE (ACCOMPANIED BY COUVE DE MURVILLE) SAID THAT THE CUBAN AFFAIR WAS US BUSINESS AND THAT FRANCE UNDERSTOOD AND WILL UNDERSTAND WHATEVER ACTIONS WE MIGHT BE FORCED TO TAKE. HE SAID THAT FRANCE WAS NOT DIRECTLY INVOLVED, BUT THEY DID NOT "BLAME" US FOR THE ACTIONS WE HAD TAKEN AND WOULD NOT IN THE FUTURE. HE THEN ASKED ME TO TRANSMIT TO MY GOVERNMENT THE ASSURANCE THAT IF DEVELOPMENTS IN THIS AFFAIR SHOULD UNFORTUNATELY LEAD TO WAR, THE US COULD BE SURE THAT FRANCE WITH ITS LIMITED MEANS WOULD BE AT OUR SIDE IN THE WAR. HE ADMITTED THAT WE ALL HOPED THAT A SOLUTION COULD BE FOUND THAT WOULD AVERT WAR AND HE KNEW THAT THIS WAS OUR WISH, BUT HE WISHED TO GIVE US THIS FIRM ASSURANCE IN THE EVENT OF THE WORST. HE EXPRESSED THE STRONG HOPE THAT WE WOULD KEEP FRENCH GOVT FULLY INFORMED OF OUR VIEWS AND INTENTIONS ALTHOUGH REPEATING THAT FRANCE HAD NO INTENTION OF TAKING ANY INITIATIVE IN THIS PURELY AMERICAN AFFAIR.

HE SAID THAT HE HAD READ WITH GREATEST ATTENTION THE COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND KHRUSHCHEV FOR WHICH HE WAS GRATEFUL AND WHILE HE NOTED THAT IN KHRUSHCHEV'S SECOND MESSAGE--THAT HE HAD REFRAINED FROM INVECTIVE HE HAD OBTAINED AN IMPRESSION OF FIRMNESS ON BOTH SIDES. HE ADDED THAT THE FRENCH FOR CENTURIES HAD LIVED WITH THREATS AND MENACES, FIRST FROM THE GERMANS AND NOW FROM

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RUSSIA, BUT HE UNDERSTOOD THE US HAD NOT HAD A COMPARABLE EXPERIENCE.

I REPLIED THAT THIS WAS HISTORICALLY TRUE BUT PARTICULARLY BECAUSE THIS INHERENT NUCLEAR THREAT TO THE US CAME FROM A QUARTER WHERE OUR WARNING AND ALERT SYSTEMS WERE NOT WELL DEVELOPED, WE SAW A VERY REAL AND SPECIAL THREAT TO THE MILITARY POSTURE OF THE US FROM THESE CUBAN BASES. HE SPOKE SLIGHTLY OF THE UN BUT SAID HE COULD UNDERSTAND THAT OUR "AFFECTION" FOR THIS INSTITUTION HAD LED US TO PUT THE MATTER BEFORE IT. I REPLIED THAT IN ADDITION TO US PUBLIC OPINION, A RECOURSE TO THE UN MIGHT GIVE THE RUSSIANS A PRETEXT FOR LESS DRASTIC ACTION, WITH WHICH HE AGREED.

IN CONCLUSION, HE SAID HE HAD WISHED TO TAKE THIS OCCASION IN CIRCUMSTANCES THE OUTCOME OF WHICH COULD NOT BE FORESEEN, TO GIVE TO THE US THE STRONGEST REAFFIRMATION OF SOLIDARITY AND SUPPORT.

I THANKED THE GENERAL FOR HIS STATEMENT AND PROMISED TO TRANSMIT IT IMMEDIATELY TO MY GOVERNMENT.

DE GAULLE'S STATEMENT WAS DIRECT AND OBVIOUSLY SINCERELY MEANT. I HOPE YOU WILL KEEP ME INFORMED TO THE GREATEST EXTENT POSSIBLE SO THAT I CAN KEEP HIM UP TO DATE.

PRESIDENT DE GAULLE WILL BE AWAY FROM PARIS AT COLOMBEY LES-DEUX-EGLISES FROM NOW UNTIL MONDAY.

DEPARTMENT TO DISTRIBUTE AS DESIRED.

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